

HONOLULU IS TO MAKE WAR ON THE MEN WHO ROB THE SAILORS

Action Will be Taken by Leading Business Men to Drive Out the Notorious "Crimps."

Record of Portland City Points the Way.

Honolulu is to make a crusade against a form of vice and injustice which it does not speedily eradicate. The land "sharks" are to be driven out. The final word that their methods will not be tolerated. Those robbers of seamen, commonly called "crimps," who have lately become numerous and bolder in the ply of their thieving trade, are to be driven from Honolulu.

Three days ago George R. Carter issued a public alarm in the matter of the Associated Charities. He said that this was a most important matter and that the present crisis in regard to it was a critical time in regard to it. The future of sailors here is being threatened. They are paid off here, and they come to be floating in the harbor, as around other ports, and the question that is going to be decided now is whether or not the system of crimps and boarding-house keepers which works an immense amount of harm in San Francisco is to obtain a foothold here. This is an immensely profitable business. The crimps take sailors in to board and take \$50 advance pay from the sailors, so that the sailor works for three months, or even longer, and must receive any money for it. The system must be fought.

Today the matter of the fight against "crimps" will take definite shape. Carter feels that willingly or unwillingly the banner of the crusade has been put in his hand and that he must pave the way for accomplishment. He has given the question deep thought and has had the advice of some of the city's best citizens. Mr. Carter has handed the report made by the committee of the Portland Chamber of Commerce, appointed to investigate the abuses of seamen. This committee has its own story in words that will fall to impress the most casual reader.

It is alleged that in the past, and present, the police force has been subservient to the ends of these crimps. Only last night two sailors were taken to the station house by the police against Lewis and Turk, two crimps whose coming here a few days ago have earned hard reputations.

There has been given authority by the police to make arrests. He took a sailor at the station house a few days ago for "investigation." He said that this is an old trick to get sailors to sign shipping papers and give the "crimps" the blood money. Sailor Graf is now on the way to the station house. He says that he was taken to the station house about two months ago at Astoria and tried to get several of the crew to leave and join another vessel. The crew's boat was cut adrift and he was left of the vessel and made to swim. Graf says that the port of the firm now working here is as follows:

One of them hangs around the Chamber of Commerce and when sailors are paid off they get good chances on other ships. The men pay \$5 for the chance and are offered an advance of \$20. Of a money the shipping master takes half, allowing the sailorman the other half.

Shoemaker, another sailorman, says that Lewis since being special officer has used his office to bluff men into shipping. He accuses the men on shore and offers them a chance to go to the reef for six months. The men usually take advantage of the proposition and Lewis draws the blood money.

George H. Carter believes that when the business men of Honolulu have the record of the Portland Chamber of Commerce before them, they will take immediate action. It is proposed to lay the matter before the Chamber of Commerce and have a committee appointed to investigate the services of the "crimps." The following is the Portland committee report. It is well worth reading:

PORTLAND COMMITTEE REPORT.

Fearful Record of "Crimps" in the Oregon City.

Portland, Oregon, Oct. 7, 1898.

To the Portland Chamber of Commerce.

Sir: Your committee on Seamen's Abuse desires to make the following report:

The term of office of the present committee began with January of this year. To make the report more comprehensive and clear, we include in it the shipping season of the whole year ending July 1, 1898.

The first of foreign-bound sailing vessels for the year ending July 1, 1898, were 113, classified as follows:

British 105
German 18
Norwegian 5
French 4
Russian 1

And the following list, showing number and disposition of seamen on sailing vessels, was furnished us by the several consulates:

| Flag | No. seamen on arrival | Deserted. |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| British | 1,536 | 649 |
| German | 412 | 104 |
| Norwegian | 124 | 18 |
| French | 84 | 13 |
| Russian | 26 | 4 |
| Total | 2,182 | 778 |

| Flag | Discharged. | Shipped on all vessels. |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------------|
| British | 76 | 729 |
| German | 5 | 103 |
| Norwegian | 5 | 18 |
| French | 5 | 8 |
| Russian | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 91 | 862 |

Percentage of desertions to number of seamen:

British.—For six months to January 1, 1898: Seamen, 846; desertions, 323; percentage, 38.18. For six months to July 1, 1898: Seamen, 690; desertions, 328; percentage, 47.55. The increase during last six months was 24 per cent. Total desertions from British ships during year 1897, 396. Total desertions from British ships during six months of 1898, 328.

For year ending July 1, 1898: German.—Seamen, 412; desertions, 104; percentage, 25.24. Norwegian.—Seamen, 124; desertions, 13; percentage, 10.84. French.—Seamen, 84; desertions, 8; percentage, 9.52. Russian.—Seamen, 26; desertions, 4; percentage, 15.38.

What Deserter Means.

The term "deserters" used in this connection is a misnomer; it would very properly be "concentrators," because, instead of deserting, all these seamen, with few exceptions, were enticed, decoyed, or by threats and intimidations forced from their vessels by a syndicate of crimps, styled sailor boarding-house keepers; and this too often with the knowledge and consent and even the connivance of captains and owners, who adopt these dishonorable means of vidding contracts usually made for three years, and thus profit by the forfeiture of the entire wages of the seamen, instead of discharging them by mutual consent and payment of the wages due. After their capture, the seamen were "detained" in the so-called sailor boarding house until sold to departing vessels.

The monthly reports of Seamen's Officer R. M. Stuart, while stationed at Astoria, enable us to present some exceedingly significant figures, showing the amount of "ransom" paid to the syndicate for these seamen concentrators, by vessels needing their services on leaving out port.

Of the 133 vessels mentioned, we have definite reports of 117, as follows: Eleven lost no men while in port. Three shipped 24 men outside of the syndicate.

One hundred and four (including one steamer) shipped 803 men through the syndicate of crimps.

Of the 803 men the syndicate received for 691 \$55 each...\$38,005.00 And for 112, prices varying from \$65 to \$107.50 each... 8,898.50 Of the whole number of 862 men shipped in this port, there are 35 of whom we have no record; but, assuming that of these the syndicate shipped the same ratio as in the foregoing, then we may add 24 men as shipped by it, and we will say at their minimum price of \$55 each... 1,870.00

Add to this a sum approximating... 2,500.00 for watchman, at \$7.50 per day each, which the syndicate charges each ship for watching its own men, and we have the heart-sickening sum of...\$51,273.50

which the syndicate took from these seamen for decoying, enthralling and selling them in this port of Portland. And, besides these items, your committee is advised of other sources of revenue derived from these seamen by the syndicate, the amount of which no man knows.

A Monumental Outrage.

The whole thing is an unnecessary, inexcusable and monumental outrage, without a scintilla of justification, and, considering all the circumstances, attending the means used, and the methods employed in filching this sum of money from these seamen, it has few parallels in the annals of crime; and if the perpetrators of it were sentenced for this one year's business, as our statutes contemplate, 1,000 years each of imprisonment would not expiate their crimes.

Such are the direct results of seamen shipments in this port for one year.

But there is another chapter to be added.

All deserters forfeit their entire accumulated wages, and, by as careful an estimate as we are able to make, considering wages paid, time for reaching ports of destination, and final arrival in Portland, the forfeited wages of these misnamed deserters, almost all of whom were literally taken from their ships by the syndicate of crimps, amounts to but little less than \$50,000; making substantially \$100,000 of which these visiting seamen have been robbed and despoiled in one year in this highly civilized and Christian city. And while we may truthfully charge it upon the syndicate, still it is not true,

that an enlightened public conscience will hold us as a community responsible for the existence in our very midst, of a system of brigandage so flagrant and inexcusable, and which can be and should be stopped at once and forever.

The work of this Chamber of Commerce at Astoria, through its officer, Mr. R. M. Stuart, deserves and has received special commendation. Many captains have expressed their high appreciation of your efforts in behalf of seamen and the shipping interests, and you have the gratitude of many a seaman, who, plundered of everything by the syndicate, and put on board with an apparel too scant for even a summer outing, and much more so for the rigors of a five months' ocean voyage, have through Mr. Stuart's efforts been supplied with a reasonable and sufficient outfit and other minor comforts, and for which the syndicate was compelled to pay.

So completely were the crimps driven out of Astoria and their power broken, that a vessel could lay for any length of time without losing a man, and that same vessel on coming to Portland would have all or nearly all of her men taken from her within 36 hours.

The work at Astoria simply shows what can be done when the people determine it shall be done, and when politics and political patronage are not used in the appointment of an inexperienced and improper officer.

Comparatively few in this community have a comprehensive knowledge of the



THE SAILOR BETWEEN THE JAIL—

character and condition of seamen, and the duration and extent of the crimes and abuses which have been perpetrated upon them in this port; and we deem this a proper occasion to present the public some information on the subject.

Seamen and Their Calling.

Seamen, the most of them, and like the most of us, come from the middle classes, and their occupation makes them a unique and in many respects a distinctive class of men, who really have few interests in common with landsmen, but they are a mighty factor in the progress and development of commerce.

The world's 30,000 seagoing vessels, with their nearly 30,000,000 tonnage, conveying the world's exports and imports of nearly \$20,000,000,000 annually, are entrusted to the active portion of some 3,000,000 sailors, whose instances of unfaithfulness in danger or other emergency are surpassingly rare.

Surely the men to whom such vast interests are committed are worthy of your friendship and solicitude.

We on land are prone to regard them as "weak and worthless" because we see them at their worst, occasioned largely by our assigning them on shore to the custody of the "strong and vicious," by whom every engine of satanic power is geared for their destruction. It is well, however, to change the point of view in estimating worth. So, reverse positions, and we take our place beside them on their native element, with groaning vessel, shattered mast, and shredded sails, when everything seems passing away beneath us; then we see them at their best; and then, too, we will realize that the most weak and worthless and pitiable object on land or sea is a landsman on shipboard in a gale. And often it is that the sailor's life is the sacrifice which insures our safety.

What chance is there for the sailors to exhibit or develop their better character in Portland, where, friendless and practically helpless, we, who should be their friends, ignore them and commit them to a ceaseless, desecrating tornado of rascality and violence, against which they have well-nigh ceased to struggle in Portland, finding no eye to pity nor arm to save?

Rightly considered, is it not a humiliating fact that if the sailors treated us on the sea as we treat them on the land, never an embarking landsman would reach the other shore?

Under the social and Christian influences throughout the world, especially of the last twenty years, the character of seamen has improved very much, and authorities on the subject tell us that "as a class they compare favorably with any other class of men." Their life has so much of exposure and hardship in it that they take them as a matter of course. It is said of them: "They are brave, brave, true and generous, cordially sharing their last possession with an unfortunate friend. They suffer and are silent and strong. They suffer and do not know it is suffering. Are brave and do not know it is bravery. Are often heroes and do not know it is

heroism. That the deeds of the common sailor often give us a glimpse of an ideal humanity and of Him who laid down His life for His friends; and finally, for weal or woe, they are to take a larger part in molding civilization and shaping national life and character."

Crimps and Their Crimes.

About twenty-five years ago, under the leadership of one James Turk, there began in the city of Portland that system of tyranny over deep-water seamen and our seaward interests which has persistently sought ever since, with varying success, to dominate our port.

The system was born in iniquity, has been fostered by greed, and sustained by the ill-gotten gains of criminal practices upon seamen, until its cup of iniquity is full and overflowing.

Throughout its whole career, laws have been violated, courts defied, and visiting seamen and their inherent and law-given rights ruthlessly outraged and trampled under foot by these demons of the beach.

The inhumanity and cruelty of James Turk toward seamen has never been denied by men who knew him; and the spirit of their great progenitor has largely animated his successors in the business, even to the present day. On ship and on shore, by night and by day, deceit, falsehood and brutality have ever been the stock in trade of the members of this profession.

Man's inhumanity to man in most virulent form, seems to have found expression all these years in our sailor boarding houses; and the heartless processes by which seamen visiting this port were robbed of hundreds of thousands of dollars of hard-earned wages, bringing untold hardship and suffering to many, many fathers, mothers, wives and children, fill all lovers of their fellowmen with sadness and righteous indignation.

The sailor boarding-house keepers,

is on"; and, if he be able to secure a crew elsewhere, grossly perjured charges of any nature will be preferred against his sailors, his vessel, or himself, to work detention of the vessel and bring final submission to their terms. Consuls interposing are insulted and defied. Charterers and agents, all of whom heartily condemn these men and their practices, have felt constrained for obvious reasons to accept tentative rates from them to avoid embarrassment and possible temporary loss; which, while it soothes the trouble for a time in a commercial sense, only increases the hardships and losses of the seamen, by fortifying the syndicate in its nefarious business and enlarging the sphere of its iniquitous influence.

Captains Want a Change.

European journals have often classed our port as one of the worst in the world; and only recently it was pronounced as bad as Callao, which comparison should completely fill our cup of humility, if not of bitterness.

Spain has cost us many precious lives and countless treasure, but it was while in Spanish lands we were lifting the hand of inhumanity from an oppressed and tyrannized people. And lo, these many years the citizens of Portland have permitted the heavy hand of inhumanity to rest relentlessly upon the often weak, almost defenseless, and usually inoffensive seamen who sojourne for a brief period in our beautiful city; and we need not be surprised that our English maritime friends see in it all many distinctively Spanish characteristics.

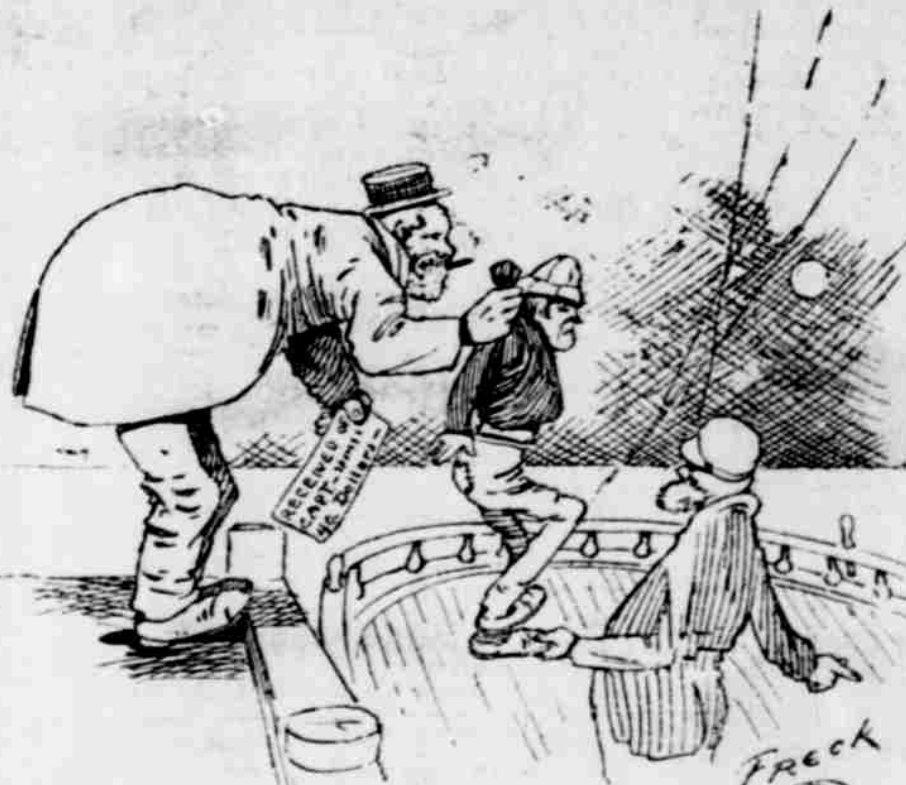
We are satisfied that every honorable owner whose vessels reach this port, and the worthy captains, some of whom are the peers of any men in excellence of character; consuls, agents, charterers, all of them, detest the whole business, and only yield temporarily to the seeming inevitable, and will right heartily welcome any determined effort on the part of this chamber, the commercial representative of our community, to take this wholly business out of the clutches of rapacity and violence, and place it on the same plane with other honorable occupations and commercial pursuits.

Worse Than Slavery.

Certainly, it is true, in the final analysis, that no commerce, commercial advancement or supremacy, is worthy the name or can prove a blessing, which is built upon the traffic in the bodies and souls of our fellow-men.

There was a time when the people of America acquiesced in taking the black man from his native bush and selling him into slavery, against the law of conscience and of God; but there came a day in the providence of God when this system went to its doom; and, while the stain of it remains to humble and to vex us, African slavery ceased to exist forever.

Nearly all of the characteristics of cupidity, cruelty and crime, which found expression in the slave trade are present in the sailor trade in Portland today, and citizens of Portland are acquiescing in it; but there will surely come a day in the providence of God, and why not now, when this iniquitous system shall also go to its doom, before the avalanche of an awakened conscience and an enlightened public opinion.



AND THE DEEP SEA

while usually correct, from policy, in their dealings with, and even gentlemanly toward townspeople; in the pursuit, control and barter of their sailor victims, they will assume any virtue, practice any vice, or commit almost any crime.

A Word About "Sharks."

In the characterization of the business and its promoters, language can scarcely do violence to either taste or propriety. The vernacular of the beach, the world over, designates them as "land-sharks," "beach-combers," "sailor-stealers," "shanghaier," "demons of the beach," "crimps," "pirates" and "thugs," as fittingly expressive of their occupation.

Many sailors fall an easy prey to these men, but few willingly; and he who refuses and resists their overtures is sleuth-hounded on deck, in fore-castle and on shore, threatened and intimidated by principal and pal, until in an unguarded moment he finds himself in the possession and power of a grafter who knows neither mercy nor justice, and absolute submission is the price of exemption from bodily violence.

Once in the crimp's den, he is made to give up money, clothes and other possessions, and is as completely enthralled during his stay in this port as if absolutely manacled; and he goes not out from hence until he has parted with the uttermost farthing his bodily services will command in this market.

So complete a tyranny as exists in our port has few parallels in modern history, and would seem to be impossible in a Christian community, for they stop not with their barbarous practices upon seamen, but woe be it that the captain who ignores these men and refuses them on board his ship; his men usually vanish like morning dew, and when he seeks others the "boy-cot-

with the men and see that all settlements have been properly made, and that the seamen have not been swindled, as is invariably the case now. These accomplishments, and the present practical assurance will be raised, and ships will come in peace, bearing our products untrammelled to the sea.

These reforms can be largely realized if we abate not one jot or tittle in the enforcement of rigorous measures against the crimps; for those who are the head and front of all offending are few, and they dare not and will not face the searchlight of public investigation and reform.

Drive Them Away.

In conclusion, your committee desires to say that this matter has not been brought before you and the public from personal animosity toward any man, however bad; but to simply and earnestly press for the abolition of a system which has become so intolerable that we ought not and must not longer temporize with it. Wars have been declared and fought out for outrages upon foreign citizens, on less provocation, it seems to us, than we give England and other countries many times every year in the treatment of their citizens, and it ought to be a subject of inquiry and remedy, under the treaty and comity of nations.

If an American sailor, assaulted in the streets of Valparaiso, is entitled to the intervention of his government, and an indemnity, then, logically, an English or other sailor who is assaulted, impounded, sold and robbed in Portland, is also entitled to the intervention of his government, and an indemnity.

Finally, in the endeavor to discharge our whole duty, we make the following proposition:

Give us the officer of our choice under the seamen's law, and give us your endorsement, moral support and reasonable financial aid, and, relying upon the justice of our cause and the courts, we will undertake to radically reform the methods of the syndicate of crimps, drive them out of town, or put them in the penitentiary.

And your committee will eagerly enter upon the task, believing that, under a sense of the bitter insult and injury this community has sustained through the inhuman practices upon these visiting seamen, we will receive such a support from our fellow-citizens as will compel success in the undertaking.

For surely God reigns, and Portland's sense of justice still lives.

Respectfully submitted,

E. QUACKENBUSH,

Chairman.

R. LIVINGSTONE,

T. J. ARMSTRONG,

B. LAMBERSON,

H. M. CLINTON,

Members of Committee.

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